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TELEGRAM

November 12, 2003

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 4969 - ROUTINE)  
TAGS: PREL  
Captions: None  
Subject: UAEG REACTION TO POTUS DEMOCRACY SPEECH  
Ref: None

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 04969

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: AMB DCM P/M ECON RSO PAO  
Laser1:  
INFO: FCS PAO

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA  
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY  
CLEARED: NONE

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DE RUEHAD #4969 3161232  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 121232Z NOV 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2397  
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3532  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0742  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0772  
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

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STATE ALSO FOR NEA/REA, NEA/ARP  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/11/13  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: UAEG REACTION TO POTUS DEMOCRACY  
SPEECH

Ref: Abu Dhabi 4903

(U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba,  
Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

1. (C) The UAEG has no plans to react publicly  
to President George Bush's speech on democracy  
in the Middle East region, Ibrahim Al-Abed, the  
senior adviser to Information and Culture

Minister Shaykh Abdallah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, told Polchief November 12. Al-Abed was quick to add that while Emiratis are generally pleased with the current political system, they are not shy about debating change. "As far as Emiratis are concerned, the speech will go away. However, the debate is open in the UAE. Change is on people's minds," he said.

12. (C) Al-Abed told Polchief that Emiratis at all levels do not like it when change is dictated or preached to them by outsiders. This is particularly so in times of crisis when people are preoccupied with the situation of Arabs in Iraq and in the West Bank/Gaza. "One right move" by the U.S. with regard to occupied lands in West Bank/Gaza would make a bigger difference than any speech, said Al-Abed, who is originally from Palestine. In this respect, Al-Abed echoed much of the local press sentiment reported in reftel. Emiratis also believe in gradualism and are not going to change their political system overnight, Al-Abed said. Polchief learned from Khadim Al-Darei, the deputy manager for de facto Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, that Shaykh Hamdan had reviewed President Bush's speech.

13. (C) COMMENT: We do not expect an official public response to the President's speech. In our view, that would be unusual.  
WAHBA